



## Expatriate Colombians celebrate their independence in style!

Aruba is now home to quite a large Colombian population who pursue the “good life” on our One Happy Island. Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup> was Colombian Independence Day, and the large number of expatriates that call Aruba home celebrated in style with a huge fair in the Entertainment Center in Dakota

Chorizo and chicken roasted on an open fire was the fare of the day, as many booths offered Colombian cuisine for sale. Everyone was dressed in the red, blue, and yellow of the Colombian flag and coat of arms and often, native Colombian costume. A wonderful show featuring classic music and entertainment of Colombia, with artist and performer Victor Samuel acting as Master of Ceremonies took up the stage for the entire day and it was an exciting outing for the entire family, no matter where one’s birthplace. Even Aruba’s “Father of Culture” Padu del Caribe took the stage to sing some of the classic Colombian boleros that he loves.

In the 19th century, 400 years after Christopher Columbus discovered the New World Colombia was still governed by Spain, and the people of the land had no say in their government. On August 7th, 1819, the Colombian people defeated the Spanish in a battle fought barefoot and with farm tools against seasoned Spanish soldiers with cannons and carbines. The battle at Boyaca's Bridge under the leadership of South America’s “Great Liberator” Simón Bolívar was decisive, and The Republic of Colombia was one of the three countries that emerged from the collapse of Gran Colombia in 1830 (the others are Ecuador and Venezuela.) Despite being originally from what is now Venezuela, Bolívar finally settled in Colombia and spent his last days there.

Colombians everywhere have pride in their country, their flag, and their coat of arms and it was well on display this past Sunday in the Dakota Entertainment Center!